

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 MCT-01 DHA-02 AID-05
CCO-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 SP-02 OC-06
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R 281447Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8219
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PINS, SF
SUBJECT: BLACK TOWNSHIP SCHOOL BOYCOTT SPREADS; SOME STUDENT
LEADERS DETAINED

REF: (A) PRETORIA 3660, (B) JOHANNESBURG 1935,

1. SUMMARY: THE ANTI-BANTU EDUCATION SCHOOL BOYCOTTS
IN THE PRETORIA AND JOHANNESBURG BLACK TOWNSHIPS CONTINUED
TO SPREAD JULY 28 ALTHOUGH IN ONE TOWNSHIP STUDENTS WERE
SAID TO HAVE RETURNED TO SCHOOL. SAG OFFICIALS REACTED BY
ATTRIBUTING THE BOYCOTTS TO "FOREIGN ELEMENTS" AND ARRESTING
THIRTEEN STUDENT LEADERS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE ANTI-BANTU EDUCATION SCHOOL BOYCOTTS IN THE JOHANNESBURG
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AND PRETORIA BLACK TOWNSHIPS CONTINUED TO SPREAD JULY 28.
THE BOYCOTTS IN PRETORIA BEGAN JULY 25
WHEN ATTERIDGEVILLE STUDENTS DECLARED THAT THEY WOULD
NOT RETURN TO SCHOOL UNTIL THE SAG ABOLISHED THE BANTU
EDUCATION SYSTEM (REF A). ON JULY 27, THE PRESS
REPORTED THAT ROAMING BANDS OF STUDENTS APPROACHED
MAMELODI SCHOOLS DEMANDING THAT STUDENTS IN THAT

PRETORIA TOWNSHIP JOIN IN THE BOYCOTT. SOME 20,000 WERE REPORTED TO HAVE EITHER AGREED OR BEEN FORCED TO COMPLY. HOWEVER, A JULY 28 PRESS REPORT SAID MANY HAD RETURNED TO THEIR CLASSROOMS THE SAME DAY.

3. BLACK STUDENTS FROM ALEXANDRA TOWNSHIP (JOHANNESBURG NORTH) DEMANDED THAT STUDENTS IN A NEARBY COLORED JUNIOR HIGH BOYCOTT CLASSES UNTIL THE SAG'S EXPENDITURES ON BLACKS AND COLOREDS WERE EQUALIZED (REF B). THE COLORED STUDENTS REPORTEDLY COMPLIED JULY 27, AND NONE HAVE GONE TO SCHOOL SINCE. IN ANOTHER ACTION, 600 DOBSONVILLE (SOWETO) STUDENTS REPORTEDLY STAGED A SIT-IN AT A SCHOOL THERE AND ORDERED THE PRINCIPAL AND HIS STAFF NOT TO RETURN TO THEIR CLASSROOMS UNTIL THEY WERE PREPARED TO TEACH "PROPER EDUCATION AND NOT BANTU EDUCATION." THE CAPE WAS RELATIVELY QUIET, ALTHOUGH ONE CAPE TOWN BLACK HIGH-SCHOOL WAS FIRE BOMBED AND PARTIALLY DESTROYED JULY 27.

4. STUDENTS IN BOTH JOHANNESBURG AND PRETORIA WERE ALSO SPORADICALLY ATTACKING OTHER VISIBLE SYMBOLS OF APARTHEID. IN ATTERIDGEVILLE, STUDENT GROUPS HAVE APPROACHED ALL TAXI OWNERS AND DEMANDED THAT THEY EITHER REMOVE OR BLACK OUT THE WORDS "NON-WHITES" ON THEIR TAXIS OR FACE REPRISALS. A SPOT CHECK IN PRETORIA STREETS SHOWED THAT ALMOST ALL HAD COMPLIED. ALEXANDRA STUDENTS SUCCESS-

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FULLY DEMANDED THAT SHOPKEEPERS REMOVE ALL SIGNS WHICH REFERRED TO NON-WHITES, BANTUS OR NATIVES.

5. BANTU EDUCATION MINISTER M.C. BOTHA BLAMED "IRRESPONSIBLE AND UNSCRUPULOUS" NON-STUDENT AND "FOREIGN ELEMENTS" FROM SURROUNDING TOWNSHIPS FOR THE BOYCOTTS AND SAID THE STUDENTS WERE RUINING THEIR OWN FUTURES. HE DENIED, AS HE HAS MANY TIMES BEFORE, THAT THERE WAS ANY DIFFERENCE IN SYLLABUS OR REQUIREMENTS BETWEEN WHITE AND BANTU EDUCATION. A SENIOR OFFICIAL OF BOTHA'S DEPARTMENT SAID IF THE BOYCOTT CONTINUED, HE WOULD ASK THAT ATTERIDGEVILLE AND MAMELODI SCHOOLS BE CLOSED. THE SECURITY POLICE REACTED BY DETAINING THIRTEEN STUDENTS FROM ATTERIDGEVILLE AND SAULSVILLE. AN SRC SPOKESMAN SAID NINE OF THE STUDENTS, SOME OF WHOM ARE MEMBERS OF THE SRC EXECUTIVE, WERE ARRESTED AT THEIR HOMES THE NIGHT OF JULY 26. ALSO, BLACK POLICE IN ATTERIDGEVILLE TICKETED SEVERAL BLACK TAXI-DRIVERS WHO HAD REMOVED "NON-WHITE" SIGNS FROM THEIR TAXIS BECAUSE OF STUDENT PRESSURE.

6. COMMENT: IT IS UNCERTAIN HOW LONG THE BOYCOTTS

WILL LAST. THE STUDENT LEADERSHIP IS PROBABLY UNSURE
OF HOW FAR TO CARRY THIS TACTIC. RELIABLE SOURCES
FROM ATTERIDGEVILLE, HOWEVER, HAVE INDICATED THAT THE
BOYCOTT THERE COULD CONTINUE INDEFINITELY. THREATS
BY THE SAG TO CLOSE THE SCHOOLS AND STOP PAYING
TEACHERS' SALARIES HAVE BEEN MET WITH INDIFFERENCE BY
STUDENTS WHO SEEM ADAMANT IN THEIR DEMANDS. MOREOVER,
PARENTAL OPPOSITION, WHICH HAS BEEN THE MAIN OBSTACLE
TO MAINTAINING SUCH PROTESTS IN THE PAST, SEEMS TO
BE LESS REVALENT THIS TIME, AT LEAST SO FAR.
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